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# The Playground

To Promote Normal Wholesome Play and Public Recreation

## Rural Recreation



AT A RURAL PLAY FESTIVAL

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leisure and fun in this world

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# The Playground

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## THE PLAYGROUND IN RURAL COMMUNITIES\*

L. H. BAILEY

Director New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, New York

It is an old quotation that "variety is the very spice of life." It seems to be a mental need that a person shall have change in interest and in occupation if he is to lead the most resourceful and effective life. According to the old saw "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." It is just as true to put the statement the other way round and to say that all play and no work will make Jack at least an ineffective unit in the world, if it does not make him actually dull. At all events, it is true that all play and no work makes one a parasite. Therefore, I do not advise the introduction of play merely because it is play, but in large part because it is one element in the necessary diversity in life.

One's occupation and one's normal activities are really educational, whether they are consciously recognized as such or not. The nature of the outlook on the world is determined very largely by the character of the vocation and of the normal and necessary pursuits in life. The diversity in affairs, so long as one's interests are not merely dispersed, multiplies one's points of contact with the world, opens the mind, enlarges the horizon, stimulates the imagination, and, therefore, adds to one's resources.

There are two reactions to the conditions of life. One is the reaction of the person who would escape these conditions and be "free." As a matter of fact, there can be no real freedom so long as there are two or more persons in the world. The other reaction is to utilize the conditions of life as best we may for our happiness and growth. Of course, we are not to be satisfied with the conditions of life, else we make no progress; but we are to utilize the common occupations, the common play, the common diversion, and all the rest, as parts in a scheme of human evolution.

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\* Address delivered at Fifth Annual Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, May 10, 1911

## THE PLAYGROUND IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The consciousness that diversity of interest and experience is essential to best development is well expressed in the rapidly extending habit of reading, in the extension of good sport of all kinds, in vacationing, in the enlargement of the means of entertainment and enjoyment, and in the shorter hours of labor for operatives. It is now necessary that we effectively organize these agencies of diversification.

The farmer is no exception to all this. He needs diversion as well as other persons, but the farmer's business comprises the round of his life. He lives on his farm. His philosophy of life grows directly out of his farm and out of his occupation. He does not need to be transported wholly away from his business, and he does not require exclusively the extraneous and the exotic. He is able largely to control his conditions and he works for himself, and he ought to develop his own type of life. The farmer is a part of his background.

New prospects must be set before the farming people, as before all other people. There is no one movement or innovation that will solve the rural problem, any more than it would solve the city problem. The problem of re-directing rural affairs is very complex. The new rural civilization must gradually evolve out of the old. It seems to be clear, however, that we should provide the farmer with only such innovations as are strong, native and significant. We must not attempt to make him a city man, nor to take him out of his background. We must be careful not to impose his improvement on him, but to let such improvement grow out of the situation.

I am convinced that we need to give much thought to plans for rural re-creation. By the word re-creation I mean what it actively and verbally signifies,—to create again. I do not mean merely entertainment or amusement or diversion. We need to create broadly new real interests, new enthusiasms, and new incentives. This is not a question of play or of sports alone, but rather of the refreshing of the life in general.

### MEANS OF RURAL RE-CREATION

If we are to have better rural re-creation, we must first of all have better agriculture. Better technical farming and a more carefully organized farm plan, will give the farmer the time that

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he needs for other interests. In future he will be able to command at least one day a week, aside from Sunday, for reading, study, vacation, and other forms of re-creation. He may not be able to secure this day in every week of the year, but he ought to be able to average this much. The farmer's free time is to come not so much by the actual shortening of the hours of labor each day as by the organization of his business in such a way that he will have whole days to himself. This will evolve a different philosophy of the lessening of the hours of physical labor from that which obtains in the workingmen groups; and this factor must be clearly recognized by our social economists. The farmer will not only overcome the physical slavery of his business, but he will acquire a useful degree of real mastery over his materials and his situation.

Rural re-creation must be projected for the entire rural population. It must apply to the old as well as to the young, and to the young as well as to the old; therefore, a formal playground scheme, while exceedingly useful, is not in itself sufficient to provide all the re-creation that the open country needs.

The rural re-creation should be properly educational. It should have relation to life, and not be merely a patch applied to the social fabric. It should be more than mere relief from toil. I think it is possible to develop a re-creational movement that will be educational at the same time that it will have all the needful elements of change, of reanimation, and of escape.

Rural re-creation ought not to be dominated by the towns, even though they are rural towns. Such enterprises should grow out of the finances and the consciousness of the open country. I should be glad to see the persons in the towns contribute their share to good plans of rural re-creation, but I should be sorry to see such plans supported by the townspeople. They should not be supported by merchants, bankers, implement dealers, grain dealers, cattle buyers, or other traders. Rural re-creation should not come as a concession to farmers. The farmer has a right to such development, as a part of his normal scheme of life. It is our position to aid him to work it out. We should head the playground movement toward the open country as well as toward the cities.

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Plans for rural re-creation should be manifestations, as far as possible, of real rural organizations, coming out of the grange, the church, the school, and other agencies already established. Some of the re-creational agencies that are already effective are grange picnics, school picnics and field days, family reunions, harvest home festivals, old home weeks, old settlers' days, celebrations of anniversaries, and fairs (particularly the local fairs).

### THE PLAYGROUND

It is as impossible to develop good re-creational features in the open country without an establishment for the purpose, as to develop a good school without a schoolhouse and a teacher, or a good religious movement without a church building and a pastor. Every community should have a permanent place set aside for re-creational enterprises. This should have the greatest connection with the out-of-doors. It should be primarily a grove; and I suggest that if there is no grove in a community that is adaptable to such purposes, an area be planted definitely with this end in view. This grove should be provided with seats, picnic tables, and a speaking-stand. Somewhere in connection with it there should be a building, preferably one that would serve as a community hall. There should also be a regular playground, to be as consciously set aside for play and for games as a town-hall is set aside for public business or as a fair-ground is set aside for fairs. Perhaps the local fair-ground could be incorporated into the re-creational scheme.

We must distinguish between games and play; and also between athletics and play. We should, of course, develop many good games; but we specially need to have kinds of play in which all the young people may engage. Games are likely to be organized for the few rather than for the many; and athletics is the development of feats of skill on the part of a very few players.

It is essential that we make the most of all the common, native and usual kinds of play and games. No doubt something can be done to revive old-fashioned sports. The introduction of exotic and theatrical sports is undoubtedly desirable in many cases, but they should be projected on the background of common indigenous activities.

## THE PLAYGROUND IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Play is worth the while when it is merely spontaneous and undirected; but it becomes very much more useful as well as more enjoyable when it is definitely organized and supervised. The time is coming when we must have in each large rural community an expert in re-creation as we now have an expert in teaching, an expert in ministering, and as we shall soon have local experts in various phases of farming. These experts will organize what will be essentially experiment stations in social practice and social justice. They will introduce not only games and play, but also re-direct the music, the drama, and many other public expressions of the open country.

### THE THING TO BE DESIRED

Many interesting suggestions are now being made for the more rapid evolution of country life. Certainly not all of them can be worked out in our lifetime. Perhaps many of the suggestions will be found, on experience, to be impracticable, but I am convinced there are two objects that need always to be kept in our vision: we must aim to diversify country life; and we must likewise aim to make it active.



The beautiful grove would not be as beautiful for these country girls but for the hours here spent in joyous play.

## "WIND BLOWS"

L. H. BAILEY

There is a game the children play  
In country districts far away,  
As quiet as the rains and snows  
And native as the grass that grows.  
"Wind blows" they call this simple game,  
And all the fields is in the name.

Billow and roll  
Bellow and toll  
'Bout tree and knoll  
The round winds bowl  
    Roundly and roundly rolling;  
And fast or slow  
Or high or low  
We halt and go  
When round winds blow  
    Like bells and bells a-tolling.

Wild dry days with all things flowing  
Flight of leaves down bare fields ranging  
Clouds adrift and white winds blowing  
Straight and steady and unchanging  
Dust-filled highways ever going  
And the tree-tops onward bending,—  
Sail and gallop surely knowing  
Where our journeys will be trending.

Under and over and under  
Over and under and over  
Tearing the orchards asunder  
Lodging the wheat and the clover  
Plunging the woods with its thunder  
Headlong and change as a drover,—  
Where we are going I wonder—  
The wind and wind is a rover.



*"WIND BLOWS"*

The clear summer breeze  
Lies deep in the trees  
With hum of the bees;  
We wander away  
In the blue June day  
With the winds to play;  
And we hardly know  
What way we should go  
So softly they flow.

So that is the way  
That the children play.  
They step from the door  
With the fields before  
And follow the course  
As they feel the force  
Of winds as they pass  
In gardens and grass,  
Like a thistle seed  
From its prison freed.  
And tiring to roam  
They turn themselves home.

Oh children, children, many a day  
I've followed the winds in fields away,  
To birds a-wing and the river-flows  
To meadows free where the wild phlox grows,  
When woods and shores and life were the aim  
And texts and schools were only a name.

And I never will be so old and gray  
But I'll track the winds in their wander-way.

## RURAL RECREATION \*

HON. WILLIAM KENT

Kentfield, California

I have listened with great interest to the remarks of Professor Bailey. It seems to me that the farm life of our country must change and be modeled more on the European system of rural communities, with farms surrounding rather than our American plan of one house situated on a quarter section of land or more. The irrigated country, with the possibility of intensive cultivation of small areas, brings people nearer together and makes the community easily possible. The fundamental trouble with our farm life has been its unsocial loneliness, which has been little less than murderous to the over-worked women.

The rural recreation permitted by the old pioneer conditions was pretty well confined to fishing and hunting. The social occasions were too rare to be taken normally, and frequently were of more harm than good. With closer settlement and better transportation, there comes the possibility for more normal social life and immediately the demand for the playgrounds and recreation centers. The recreation idea, of course, must be taken in its larger sense and not merely confined to the idea of amusements. The playground is no less necessary in the country than in the city, although the early idea of the small park and playground carried with it an idea of transporting a little of outdoors into congested centers.

I presume I am asked to speak here because I helped my mother to establish what is known as Tamalpais Centre in a suburban community near San Francisco. This was in the nature of an experiment. Our community was like many another in having its stratifications of society. The most objectionable features were a number of saloons that were rendered unusually noxious from the fact that they were the attraction that brought a large number of disreputable people from the great city into our neighborhood. The time came when the community objected, and these were put out of

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\* Address delivered at Fifth Annual Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, May 10, 1911

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business. They would not have been eliminated unless we had had this Centre to point to as a public institution to promote rational pastime, which would be injured by the saloon associations. A building was put up and ball ground and race track laid out, and a childrens' playground with apparatus was also furnished by one of the neighbors. We found that the people would not travel on schedule. They liked some features of the entertainments furnished and failed to appreciate others. A great many dances were held in the building by all sorts of social organizations. A few lectures were well attended; interest in baseball was sporadic and the race track was fairly well used. The study classes provided did not seem to succeed very well, although the dean of the Centre, Mr. Ernest Bradley, was remarkably well qualified to carry them on. The great success of the institution was the Woman's Club, which started out with open doors to all the women of the neighborhood and has succeeded on an absolutely democratic scheme. This club has been the backbone of the work, and, with its more than one hundred and fifty members earnestly studying the problems of the county and enjoying themselves in their social life, is having a great influence for good. The children's playground has also succeeded remarkably well. A playground instructor is on hand, not only to help the children, but to instruct the public school teachers so that they in turn can organize the play in their schools. It is much better that I should refer to the report of Mr. Bradley concerning the work up to the present time than that I should string out my remarks. Ours was an experiment in sociology, an attempt in a new field, and we cannot know the results until eight or ten years more have passed. One thing is sure, and that is, it will never amount to anything as a social scheme until it becomes self-supporting and is sustained from public taxes as a normal community enterprise. Such centers are needed by the people in communities of every sort. They should not await the impulse of someone able to give them, but should be established and paid for by the community. They are sure to bring a better social life that will lead toward social justice, and we can never have social justice or real democracy until each understands the other fellow's problems.

## A RURAL EXPERIMENT



A COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER, KENTFIELD, CALIFORNIA.

## A RURAL EXPERIMENT

REV. ERNEST BRADLEY

Dean of Tamalpais Centre, Kentfield, California

The reasons for making this statement about our work at Tamalpais Centre are threefold. In the first place it is offered to our friends,—men, women, and children,—as a record of some of the things we have been able to do; in the second place it is offered to those who are continually writing to us from all parts of the country for information; and in the third place it is offered to those who, sitting in the seat of the scornful, prophesied failure for the experiment. It is true that we have not had the success we anticipated along certain lines, but then this is true of all work of this kind. Because we have failed in some things, we are the

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better able to rejoice in the things that have been a success; and the things that have been a success are worth while. Tamalpais Centre has had a good influence upon the county at large, to say nothing of what it has done in its own immediate vicinity. It is in keeping with a great movement that is already beginning to make itself felt all over the country, a movement which means for our rural communities "better farming, better business, and better living." We might truly say that Tamalpais Centre was a pioneer in this movement for better living in rural and suburban communities. For many years statesmen, clergymen, and social workers have been wondering what was the matter with our country towns, which were being so systematically drained of their best men and women, that those who were left behind seemed to have lost all heart to better their own condition. Then it was realized that the difficulty was to a very large extent a social one, and that we must expect the city to attract the countryman in the future as it has in the past; the immediate thing to do was to "recognize the necessity of building up the life of the country upon its social as well as its productive side," and to insist upon the rural community coming to its own again as one of the co-ordinating forces of our national life.

Realizing this there have arisen recently a number of men and women who have been willing to give their money, or their time, or both, to social experiments which have for their aim better living in country communities. Among those experiments is Tamalpais Centre. Within an hour's ride of San Francisco, this work may be considered by some to be a suburban experiment, but it has so many qualifications which make it a kind of norm for other communities to follow, and so many problems which belong to the country, rather than to the city, that I have not hesitated to call it a rural experiment.

Tamalpais Centre was born on May Day, 1909. It is situated at Kentfield, Marin County, California, and is the gift of Mrs. A. E. Kent to the towns of Southern Marin. It is centrally situated and admirably adapted to the work contemplated by the donor. Twenty-nine acres of level land, at the foot of Mount Tamalpais, and surrounded by wooded hills, have been donated, and also a splendidly equipped club house. In addition to this the Hon. William Kent, the son of Mrs. A. E. Kent, gave a fund of ten

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thousand dollars to fit out the grounds and to reclaim a portion of the land, subject to winter overflow. Suitable apparatus and equipment for a children's playground were also given by Mr. John Martin.

As an organization, Tamalpais Centre consists of a corporation of eight directors, and thirteen other men who together make up a board of twenty-one trustees, one of them being the executive head with the title of dean. The trustees in inviting the present dean to be its executive head struck the key note of its policy when they said: "Tamalpais Centre, as you know, has been established to meet the social needs of our time and place. It must be a center of neighborliness wherein all of us working together may more fully enjoy the life granted each of us. It is destined to mean opportunity for rest, recreation, and instruction to men, women, and children. Our community is composed of people of all creeds and no creeds. Any recognition of denominationalism in our work would destroy the possibility of each of us being able to claim the Centre as his own."

A large space of the acreage has been devoted to baseball, and has been used continually during the last two seasons by several local teams, as well as by visiting teams. There is also a half mile track for the speeding of horses, a necessary adjunct in a village community. No betting is allowed, actual racing is placed on other days than Sunday, and if the men feel that they must swear, as horsemen sometimes do, they are asked to swear low. There is also ample room for tennis, basketball, running tracks, and the things called for in a well equipped athletic field. These features are for use every hour of daylight and seven days in the week, except that no Sunday dancing is allowed.

About this federal head known as Tamalpais Centre are grouped the various associations and classes which speak for its educational and social ideals. These organizations are independent of each other, having their own officers, and for the most part raising their own funds, and also paying a small per capita towards the general expenses of the Centre. They represent the application of the social ideals of good will and neighborliness, not to the congested districts of a large city, but to a suburban and rural community. The people we are after are not the poor, for there are few such in the district, but the tolerably well to do. After two

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years' work we may speak, not of what we intended to do, but of what we have done, and of what we are doing. Many things we intended to do have not materialized, and some things we have tried to do have turned out failures. Like every new social experiment we have had our difficulties, and some of them remain to this day, and are likely to remain until the population of the community increases and the railway fares are less prohibitive to those of our friends who live in the nearby towns. Apart from these difficulties there have been the usual number of people sitting in the seat of the scornful, and the usual number of troubles which come to an infant organization—sneezings, colds, measles, and what not, but as we expected these things our disappointment has not been as keen as disappointment usually is.

We have tried first and foremost to speak and act like good neighbors in a community where people appeared to love their isolation, and where they were naturally suspicious of the work we had in hand. We have gathered a few here, and a few there, until at the present writing Tamalpais Centre shelters some fourteen different organizations and classes. Among those organizations the place of honor belongs to the Woman's Club. The women have made good as they always do when they support a good cause. Though but young the club has established some very good traditions such as an annual Wild Flower Day, Old Settlers' Day, and May Day. They have held many interesting sessions and raised a considerable amount of money for furnishings and improvements on the club house. They have conducted lectures on the topic of "Our Own County," and looked into such things as a pure milk supply, public institutions, Indian traditions, geology, botany, woman's suffrage, and kindred subjects. It may readily be seen that this woman's club is the nerve center of a social ideal with a serious purpose. It affords an opportunity to the women of the county to make their influence felt, not only in the more common business of social clubs, but in the things that educate, the things that make for good citizenship, and a purer democracy. The club is now in its third year, has a membership of over one hundred and sixty, has been remarkably free from discord, and is full of enthusiasm for the future.

The next organization worthy of mention is the Friendly Circle. This circle is a club of working men and women with a membership





AT TAMALPAIS RECREATION CENTER, KENTFIELD, CALIFORNIA



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of sixty. It is an attempt to solve for a village community the so-called servant problem; and we are finding out that it ceases to be a problem as soon as the man or woman who drives our horses, or who digs our garden, or who cooks our dinner is looked upon as an efficient co-worker and friend. We must have got the idea of the name "Friendly" from the Kents who have no servants in the ordinary sense of the term. All whom they employ are friends, and nobody ever heard of a servant problem on the Kent place. The circle meets on Wednesday evenings at nine o'clock, and then for two hours we dance, play games, read, recite, and sing. A program is not usually arranged, and there is seldom a dearth of something to do. Everything is as natural as it can be, and there is a spirit of *comaraderie* which levels all problems, and bridges over social inequalities. During the actual rainy season, when many of the people go to the city for two or three months, the circle takes a holiday, but nine months in the year the average attendance is about forty men and women. Attached to the circle is a civil government class for working men who are looking forward to American citizenship.

Tamalpais Centre has also a Literary Class which meets every other Tuesday evening, and has a membership of twenty-five men and women. Among other things we have studied plays of Shakespeare, Stephen Phillips, Edmund Rostand, and the Book of Job. After the study of the evening there is a social chat around the big fireplace with a cup of coffee, or a social hop in the large hall for those so disposed. It is not every literary society that can read the Book of Job and finish up with a two-step, and yet it is done at the Centre, and done without appearing incongruous.

One of the best pieces of work that Tamalpais Centre is doing is along the lines of the playground movement. We have organized the teachers of the public schools into a playground association. The women teachers from nine or ten different school districts meet at the Centre every Wednesday afternoon for a practical course in playground work. The teachers not only enjoy the work, which is naturally of a social and relaxing nature, but they are carrying the idea of supervised play into their own school yards, and the children all over the southern part of the county are learning folk dancing and the traditions of play which cannot help being an untold blessing to all concerned. These same teachers and

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children make up the groups for our May Pole contest, which is held on some day near the first of May. This year eight schools have entered, and will dance for the trophy, which is a silver cup. An interesting feature of the Teachers Playground Association this year was the meeting of the County Institute at Tamalpais Centre for one day during its session. The day was a revelation to them all. There was not only the usual instruction, and dry routine of business, but the teachers and children gave a splendid exhibition of folk dancing and games, and then, during the lunch hour, the whole institute turned in to dance and play with such energy that the superintendent had some difficulty in calling the teachers to the routine of business again.

The children's playground work at Tamalpais Centre is under the trained leadership of a young woman, who, besides the regular outdoor work, has three children's classes under her charge, and two women's classes. Connected with this department, and under male supervision, are the boys' baseball and basketball teams, and the Knights of King Arthur. It has been the ideal of this playground department to teach that the real work of the playground movement lies, not in setting apart spaces for play, or in erecting costly apparatus only, but in supplementing these things with instruction and arranging a program of plays which have special relation to the development of children and the making of good citizens.

Besides these features of which I have spoken there is a Driving Association for the speeding of horses, and various groups of men who use the grounds for baseball on Sundays and holidays. During the past two years there have been art classes, religious study classes, sewing classes, dancing classes, civil government classes for women, a story hour for children, and a series of pleasant Sunday afternoons around the fireplace, of a literary and social nature.

The purely religious service has not been introduced. The nearest approach has been a series of civic services held on the Sunday afternoons preceding public holidays. These services have stood for the highest things in the commonwealth. All creeds and no creeds have been represented. Here we have gathered, not because we were this or that, but because we were Americans. We have tried in a feeble way to approximate an ideal which Dr. Jenkin

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Lloyd Jones gave to us at our opening, and that is to be "an embryonic cathedral, the communal meeting house for which democracy waits, and which the highest religious inspiration as well as the growing ethical instincts of the community demand." These services have been fairly well attended, and would, ere this, have developed into a regular institution, had it not been for the prohibitive railway rates, and an inconvenient time-table.

The Sunday school might be considered an exception to any attempt to foster a religious service upon the community, because it is something that has been forced upon us. The nearest churches or Sunday schools lie in the towns and villages about us, so that Kentfield itself is peculiarly deficient in this respect. Realizing that something should be done for the children, the dean of Tamalpais Centre gathered his own children about his own fire-side every Sunday morning for religious instruction. It was not long before other children asked permission to attend this fire-side Sunday school. Then as the school grew in numbers and the winter came on, the children were transferred to the Centre building and organized under the name of the Sunday School of the Neighborhood. The instruction is non-sectarian, and we have four teachers, and over thirty boys and girls. At Christmas we held a manger service and invited all the young people interested in the Centre from the surrounding towns and villages to bring presents of toys, and books, and games for the children of the Catholic and Presbyterian orphanages of the county. Over two hundred boys and girls accepted the invitation and it was an inspiring sight to see them march up to the manger and deposit their simple gifts for their little orphan friends. In connection with the Sunday school I was asked the other day what I thought was the best piece of moral work Tamalpais Centre was doing in this immediate community. I answered that it was in teaching boys and girls, many of whom had been in the habit of running around all day on Sunday in old clothes, to put on their best "bib and tucker" as a mark of respect to God and to a day which civilization had set aside for worship. All the boys and girls come down to the Sunday school looking as spick and span as it is possible for them to look, and the result is at least civilizing, if not indeed religious.

The spacious floor of the club house at Tamalpais Centre is a favorite gathering place for the high school students of San

## *A RURAL EXPERIMENT*

Rafael for their class dances, and also for church fairs, as both the Catholic and Episcopal churches in the neighboring towns have used the building on several occasions. Entertainments are given from time to time and are fairly well attended.

The largest gathering held in connection with the Centre is the annual May Fete. Last year nearly six thousand people were on the grounds and over one hundred track, field, and platform events were participated in by the boys and girls of the county. The May Fete began three seasons ago as a kind of a free for all event for everybody who came, but since then it has been the policy of the administration to encourage the schools to take up the affair and make the fete in a peculiar manner their own. This year two-thirds of the events were under the supervision of the teachers of the public schools, and the trophies, which were for the most part cups, were contested for with remarkable enthusiasm. The procession, led by the band of the St. Vincent's Orphanage, is one of the main features of the day, and as the various groups of contestants pass by the queen's throne, round after round of applause is given by the parents and visitors.

Such is the work we are trying to do at Tamalpais Centre. It speaks for itself, and in spite of whatever failures we have been compelled to register, it deserves to live. Its life, however, will depend on the community realizing the possibilities of the experiment. A most valuable piece of property has been presented to the people of Southern Marin. Many of them appreciate it, and some do not. It is within the bounds of reason that most of them will appreciate it in the course of time. With the incoming of a larger population, with less prohibitive rates on the railway, and a more convenient time card of trains, more and more people will use the club house and grounds, and as the years go on the venture will become self-supporting. With such an excellent woman's club as the backbone of the institution, one need not fear for its future.



THE BOYS OF A COUNTRY SCHOOL ON A TRIP TOGETHER

## THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTER\*

MYRON T. SCUDDER

Headmaster The Rutgers Preparatory School, New Brunswick, New Jersey

When the rural school really finds itself it will pay much attention to wholesome indoor and outdoor recreation. There will be social evenings, lyceum activities and clubs of various sorts, there will be the woodcraft and water sports of the Boy Scouts



VOLLEY BALL AT A PLAY FESTIVAL IN THE COUNTRY

*Memories for Years to Come*

and Camp Fire Girls, as well as the plays and games and contests of the playground and athletic field. All these things and more are included in the wider meaning of the words play and playground.

It has been suggested that the playground as it is now conceived ought to be called the "outdoor" school, for such it

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\* Written for the Year Book of the National Society for the Study of Education

## THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTER

really is, while the meaning of the word play must be extended to include all means of passing one's leisure or recreation hours.

Play is the rightful heritage of country children as well as of city children and it is to the district schools that we must look in largest measure to see that these children come into their own.

An adequate program of play would include pleasurable outdoor and indoor occupation, for (a) homes, (b) day schools, (c) Sunday schools, (d) other social organizations, public and private, suitable for Sundays as well as for week days, adjusted to the season of the year, and adapted to the needs of (1) very little children, (2) children from eight to thirteen, (3) boys and girls in the adolescent period, (4) adults, sex as well as age being taken into account when necessary. The word play thus broadened brings us into the realm of kindergartens, manual training departments, vacation schools, summer camps, boys' clubs, girls' clubs, nature-study clubs, camera clubs, collection clubs: it has to do with swimming, fishing, boating, skating, skeeing, and snow-shoeing; also with all forms of athletics; with the use of tools and implements, with the use of clay, plasticine, paper pulp, and putty for modeling; with the use of tops and marbles, bean bags, balls and kites, stilts, toys, soap bubbles, cards, dissected maps, scrap books, and the myriad other amusement materials, plays, and games which are the heritage of the human race, and without sharing in which no child can grow to complete manhood or womanhood, and no adult can live a cheerful, joyous, well-rounded-out life.

It must be borne in mind that play in the country is not so much to promote health as to develop the higher social instincts, to introduce another powerful centripetal factor into country life which will tend to counteract the expulsive features which have been so actively depopulating our rural districts. The country child does not play enough. His repertoire of games is surprisingly small and inadequate. If he would play more he would love the country better, see more beauty in it, feel the isolation less.

And he would play more if conditions were favorable, for, unfortunately, they are not favorable to play. He does not know how to play or what to play; his parents are usually out of sympathy with play; and in the country schools not only are



## THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTER

his teachers as ignorant as himself in regard to these matters, but even if the child and the teacher *did* know, the school trustee would in many cases interpose objections and forbid any effort in the direction of organized play or athletics. Left to themselves only a comparatively few country districts will attempt to do anything. Initiative will have to come from the outside, but experience shows that with tactful persistence and with organized action considerable may be accomplished even in a short time.

A very important result of play in the country is the development of community spirit which is so seriously lacking in rural districts. There seems to be so little to hold people together. Social forces are centrifugal rather than centripetal. But once interest children in play, get them to organize teams, design and make a school banner, compose and learn a school cheer, adopt a distinctive athletic costume or even a celluloid button which is to be worn when they go to the next great play festival and compete with other schools, and there will be no lack of community spirit so far as the children are concerned, and the adult population will soon be catching something of it too.

As the school is the natural play center of the community, and as supervised play is the only really good kind of play, it follows that the teachers must be play leaders. It is a sorry fact that so few of them are interested, and that so few know how to play. This suggests that courses in play should be given in normal schools and in teachers' training classes, and that teachers' institutes and associations should take the matter up as practically as possible in their meetings. The country school teachers are handicapped because they are obliged to work almost single handed. They must go to the grange for encouragement and assistance, and they will get it too, for the grange has many wide awake men and women who will gladly co-operate. The normal schools too, and agricultural colleges must go to their aid, help lay out the grounds, perhaps construct some apparatus, teach new games, assist in conducting badge competition contests. Several of these institutions are already doing these things.

Another very important source of help is the County Work



## THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTER

Department of the Young Men's Christian Association. Indeed most of the play propaganda in rural districts has been carried on under the County Work secretaries, and it is a splendid story that we get from Ulster, Dutchess, Orange and Rockland Counties in New York state, from White River Junction in



WATCHING A RURAL PLAY FESTIVAL

This man was once a boy himself. The memory of the old days comes back.

Vermont, and many other places where the Young Men's Christian Association men is teaching and practicing the gospel of play among country boys.

## THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTER

The most important factor in promoting play in the country is the Field Day and Play Festival, the great day of the year when the country schools of the district or township meet at some central point and pass the day in play. Since the first field day of this sort was started six years ago in New Paltz, New York, the idea has spread from ocean to ocean and it may be said that the Field Day and Play Festival has become an important rural institution in this country. This has been carefully described by the writer of this article in the little manual published by the Playground Association of America, "The Field Day and Play Picnic for Country Children." Guided by this manual many of these occasions have been successfully administered in all parts of the United States.

This article cannot go into the matter of play organization, ways and means, and play day programs for rural schools. Its purpose is merely to indicate the more obvious phases of the play propaganda in relation to these schools, to point out leads that may be followed up. Perhaps it is not too much to say that through properly supervised play and through a series of properly conceived and well conducted festivals the civic and institutional life of an entire county or district, and the lives of many individuals of all ages, may be permanently quickened and inspired, the play movement thus making surely for greater contentment, cleaner morals, and more intense patriotism and righteousness on the farm lands and in the village populations of our country.

### RURAL RECREATION SECRETARY

The time is coming when we must have in each large rural community an expert in recreation, as we now have an expert in teaching, an expert in ministering, and as we shall soon have local experts in various phases of farming.

L. H. BAILEY,

Director New York College of Agriculture,  
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.



#### EDUCATION THROUGH PLAY

Is it worth while for the child to know the trees and birds—to learn the moods of Nature?

## EVENING RECREATION CENTER WORK BY A UNIVERSITY \*

EDWARD J. WARD

Acting Secretary of the Welfare Department of the University of Wisconsin,  
Madison, Wisconsin

This annual meeting has been a satisfactory one in at least two things. This evening in this room somebody said, "Is it not a great thing to see the president of this association so far forget himself as to engage in the folk dancing?" I replied, "It is indeed a great thing to see him so far remember himself as to show that he really practices what he preaches."

Possibly the best way to begin the short story of what is being done at the University of Wisconsin would be to tell you of the recreation field day in the new capitol at Madison, Wisconsin. A joint public hearing of the assembly and the senate was granted on two bills, the first of which declared the right of the citizens in the community to the use of their property in schoolhouses and other public buildings for civic purposes during the times when they were not in use for their prime purpose. So far as I know, Wisconsin is the first state to establish the right of her citizens to the by-product of their civic machinery. The second provided for a department of public recreation. Motion pictures were used at this hearing as a means of showing how the idea of the organization of recreation centers by the University is extending throughout the state. Let me tell you about two men and one woman who appeared at that hearing. The first was a newspaper reporter who had become so interested in the evening recreation problem through his being detailed to write it up that he paid his traveling expenses to come a hundred miles to plead for these two bills. The second was Jenkin Lloyd Jones of the Abraham Lincoln Center, who got up from his sick bed to come and address the Legislature, not from the point of view of the city's need, but from the point of view of the need of the rural com-

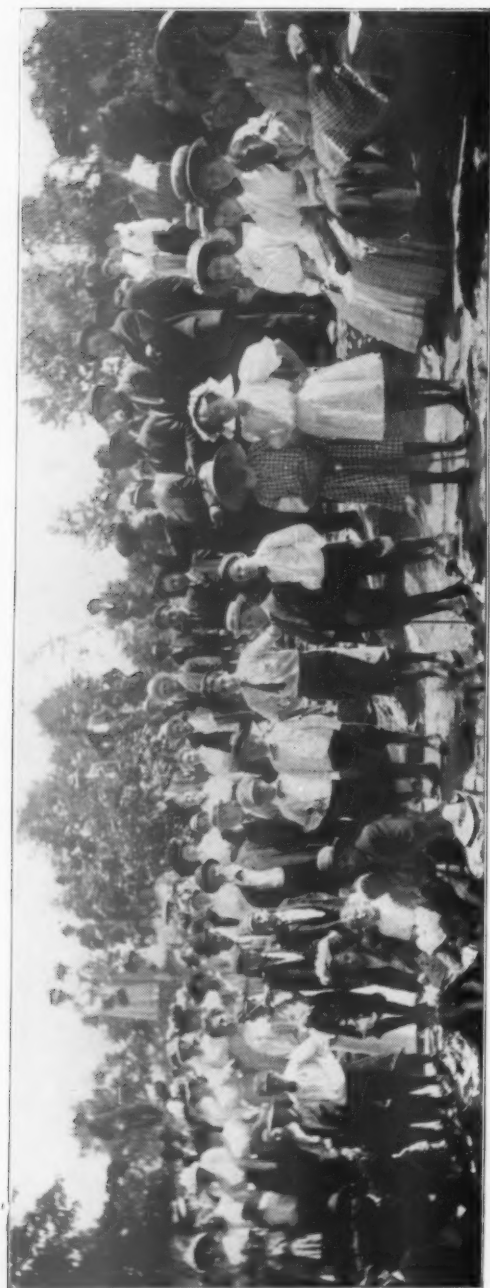
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\* Address delivered at Fifth Annual Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, May 12, 1911

## *EVENING RECREATION CENTER WORK*

munity for organized, intelligent, social and recreational opportunities, especially in the evening. The third was Mrs. Alice Merry, who last year began the organized effort to play in Lapham Park. You have heard of Schlitz beer that is made in Milwaukee, and of the Schlitz Beer Garden that was a famous resort in that city for so many years. When this property came into the possession of the city Mrs. Merry one day found three children playing there. Without any right or permission she asked the children if they didn't want to play with her. This they did and promised to bring other children the next day. The next day there came two hundred and fifty. With the names of those two hundred and fifty children she went to City Hall and thereby secured the Park Board's support of what has come to be known as Lapham Park Neighborhood Center and Playground. Today, largely through her efforts, it is possible to walk into the old Schlitz Beer Garden, go up to the bar, put your foot on the rail, and ask for something,—and you get a book from the branch public library! The use of the Capitol in the evening for the discussion and presentation of that idea is a novel means of education and it seems to me an important one.

As for the other things the University is doing in the way of promoting recreation and especially in the establishing of evening centers, let me say first that the University, for a number of years, through its extension division, has been supplying to groups not only lectures and libraries, but opportunities for debate and discussion on almost any subject that could be suggested. It stands ready to supply such material as this to any community using its school building for evening centers, but that has been distinctly educational. This year, along with that and in similar lines with it, and because it is just as educational, the state university has established the beginnings of a state motion picture film exchange, with the idea of providing free of charge to any evening recreation center, whether schoolhouse, or library, or whatever, motion picture films of an educational and valuable character. In order to help communities to realize what a magnet the motion picture is in getting all the people together in the evening,—even the foreigners who do not understand English,—the University has



*LaFollette's Weekly Magazine, Madison, Wisconsin*      **A FARMERS' PICNIC**

## EVENING RECREATION CENTER WORK

supplied itself with machines and a staff of mechanics to be sent into the rural communities in order to give demonstrations to prove that it would be advantageous for that community to supply itself with a machine so as to be able to take advantage of the film exchange at the University. This has been going on for about a month, and was accomplished with the help of Mr. John Collier, educational secretary of the National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures. The effect of that and its success make me feel that the University has found a splendid practical means of gathering the people together for the beginnings of a civic and social and ultimately recreational development of all kinds. As soon as a community has become excited over anything it responds and awakens to its need; then is sent a man to the community to plan the organization of the town for civic and social recreation activities. Immediately the problem arises of how to start. The fact that we have as head of the department of physical training Professor Ehler, who is also a director of this Association, means much in solving that problem. The first thing after the town meeting is the suggestion that the community, even though it be a little one, get a man to aid in the organization of a sane Fourth of July celebration, or a play festival of any kind that is appropriate to the season of year, and then if he makes good, it is suggested that he be engaged for the whole year as supervisor of recreation in the town. Four rural communities have already sent in applications for a man to come to them in this capacity. Where are we going to find people to fill these positions, you ask. Professor Ehler came to Wisconsin because the authorities had come to the belief that a state university should not simply give training to the fellows who need it least, but that the play spirit should be developed in all the students, and that students should be trained to go out through the state and, in turn, develop the play spirit among the people. The two things Professor Ehler is working for are the development of the play spirit among the students, and the selection from the student body of those men and women who are capable to be play leaders so that when they go out they shall know how to organize the recreation of their community. This in a general way is the plan of the University of Wisconsin to help on the recreation movement throughout



## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

the state. The University has found that by this means, which is distinctly educational it reaches a class of people that it could not reach by sending the usual university extension lectures or material. It is no less interested in educational things in a more restricted sense, but it recognizes that recreation is essentially education, and that civic promotion is essentially education.

As I have come to be acquainted with rural conditions it has seemed to me most pathetic to find the young fellows coming to the cities seeking sociability and finding it there. It is a proof that we are of one blood, and that our differences will disappear as soon as we shall come to know each other well. This year's work has taught me that the rural community needs to have developed the atmosphere of genuine sociability and a spirit of freedom from prejudice, just as does the city community.

In its mission of recreation, the Playground and Recreation Association of America must carry its message to city and country alike.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS \*

The Boy Scout idea is so new and the work thus far of such an experimental character that the committee is not prepared to make at this time recommendations of a very definite character. The topic, "Boy Scouts on the Playground," has been taken up at each of the four playground institutes and at three of these institutes demonstrations of Boy Scout activities were provided by local patrols of boy scouts. The delegates have uniformly expressed interest in this movement and have inquired about the details of organization and methods of procedure. Printed matter on this subject is available at the National Headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Your committee believes that this plan of work with boys may be used by the playground directors to great advantage in getting hold of the older boys. There is no good reason why

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\* Report given at the Fifth Annual Meeting of Playground and Recreation Association of America, May 10, 1911



## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

each playground should not have its troop of boy scouts made up of patrols of eight members each. The plan of the organization is that each patrol shall have a leader who shall be responsible to the scout master for the boys in his group. The troop consists of a number of patrols in charge of a scout master. This scout master may be the director of the playground, or some young man whom he may secure to take charge voluntarily of this work for him. The patrols might be used in turn to look after the placing of apparatus, the regulation of its use under instruction from the director and the keeping of order on the playground.

It will be necessary to watch the development of this work during the coming year and find out just what features of it are applicable to the playground and how it can be used to advantage with the older boys. A plan of inter-troop competitions has been devised which might be used to advantage where there are several playgrounds in the same city, or inter-patrol on the same playground. The troops representing these different playgrounds would compete for a troop banner which would be held by the winning playground for a period of about one month. This plan is presented here merely as a suggestion. It is as follows:

### INTER-TROOP COMPETITION

A banner is awarded monthly to the troop scoring the greatest number of points under the following plan:

- (a) A patrol shall consist of eight scouts, one of whom shall be the patrol leader.
- (b) A troop shall consist of three or more patrols.
- (c) A scout may not change from one troop to another without the consent of the scout masters concerned.
- (d) The total number of points scored by a troop shall be divided by the number of patrols in the troop, thus giving the average point winning ability of a patrol. This will make it possible for small troops to compete successfully against large troops.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

### EVENTS AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH POINTS WILL BE AWARDED

#### 1. PROMOTIONS

Number of points awarded to scout passing tenderfoot requirements .....	5
Second Class .....	10
First Class .....	15

#### 2. MERIT BADGES

Number of points awarded to scout winning merit badges..	20
(A scout may win as many as he chooses.)	

#### 3. CAMPAIGNING

##### Knots

Points awarded to scout tying knots (each knot tied and named) .....	2
(Duplication not permitted.)	

##### Fire Lighting Without Matches, with Fire Sticks

	<i>Points</i>
3 minutes.....	25
5    "       .....	20
6    "       .....	15
7    "       .....	10
8    "       .....	5

Note—One trial allotted to each scout every month.

##### Water Boiling

Note—This test may be taken but once a month. The scout must gather his own wood. This must not be done previous to the time of the test.

	<i>Points</i>
6 minutes.....	25
8    "       .....	20
10   "       .....	15
12   "       .....	10
Over 12 minutes.....	5

The following sized vessels may be used:

- 5 inch diameter or smaller—I quart of water.
- 8 inch diameter or less—2 quarts of water.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

### Swimming on Breast

	<i>Points</i>
50 yards.....	25
40 ".....	20
30 ".....	15
20 ".....	10
15 ".....	5

### Swimming on Back

	<i>Points</i>
25 yards.....	25
20 ".....	20
15 ".....	15
10 ".....	10
5 ".....	5

Note—One test allotted to each scout during period of contest.

### Hikes

	<i>Points</i>
Each scout going on hike.....	5

Note—The number of hikes during the term of test is unlimited.

A hike consists of not less than five miles and must be attended by five or more members of the troop.

### Week-End Camps

	<i>Points</i>
Attended by 10 scouts.....	25
" " 15 ".....	50
" " 20 ".....	75
" " 24 ".....	100

## 4. HYGIENE

### Abstaining from Tobacco

	<i>Points</i>
To every scout in troop who does not use tobacco, points per week .....	10

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

### Cleanliness

The scout master will make an inspection once a month giving no notice of the time. Scoring will be handled on the basis of general neatness, *viz.*: clean face, hands, hair brushed, shoes cleaned. The marking to be as follows:

	<i>Points</i>
Fair .....	5
Good .....	10
Excellent .....	15

### 5. SIGNALLING

#### (Any Code)

	<i>Points</i>
16 letters per minute.....	10
20 " " " .....	15
30 " " " .....	20
35 " " " .....	25

Points will be awarded for meeting the requirements in any or all of the three codes, making it possible for the scout who can send 35 letters a minute in the Semaphore, Meyer and Morse codes to win 75 points each month. Two tests a month in each code allotted to each scout.

### 6. STALKING

#### For Taking Pictures

Note—But two photos a month may be submitted by each scout.

	<i>Points</i>
Picture of bird or wild animal taken at distance of—	
4 feet.....	50
6 " .....	40
7 " .....	30
8 " .....	25
10 " .....	20
12 " .....	15
14 " .....	10
16 " or over.....	5

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOY SCOUTS

### 7. FIRST AID

To each scout successfully meeting requirements in the following sections, the points will be awarded as follows:

#### Section 1—25 Points

Have a knowledge of and know how to apply the following:

Arm sling	Jaw bandage
Foot bandage	Reverse roller
Hand bandage	Compress
Head bandage	Splint
Eye bandage	Tourniquets

#### Section 2—20 Points

Knowledge of the following:

Coat Stretcher  
Rescue person from burning building  
Fireman's lift

#### Section 3—10 Points

Know and demonstrate:

Three methods of rescuing drowning person  
Two methods of resuscitation

The committee suggests that playground directors having experience with Boy Scout troops should inform the executive secretary of the Playground and Recreation Association of America in regard to desirable and undesirable features of the plan. In this way it will be possible for such features of the work as are suitable for use on the playground to be brought to the attention of those interested.

Respectfully submitted.

LEE F. HANMER, *Chairman*,  
G. E. JOHNSON,  
E. S. MARTIN.



*L. W. Hine*

A minister or a school teacher in a country district, who can enter whole heartedly into the sports of the boys and the men, can change the moral atmosphere of the district. Whether the swimming hole shall promote moral as well as physical health depends upon the leadership.

POCATELLO PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WALTER R. SIDERS, SUPERINTENDENT  
POCATELLO, IDAHO

June 22, 1910.

A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc.,  
Chicopee, Mass.

Gentlemen:

The School Playground equipped with Gymnasium Apparatus has changed the atmosphere of our school at recesses and intermissions. Formerly there was always a spirit of mischief prevailing, which required constant supervision to prevent material harm to the school property, quarreling among the pupils or interference with people passing by. It is strange that we never thought that here was energy needing nothing but direction into proper channels, but such we have found to be the case. The pupils now have an outlet for their energies, and an opportunity to give physical expression to themselves.

The effect upon the discipline of the schools has been astonishing. The pupils seem more happy, more contented with their school. It seems to have contributed to the feeling that the school is an attractive place; a place where they would like to be. This feeling of contentment has made the pupils less restless, more tractable and more easily led.

We have been surprised, furthermore, to learn how quickly the pupils form their own rules as to what is equitable and just in the use of the apparatus. A certain number of Swings, so much time for the Giant Stride, and so on for all the apparatus. The democracy of childhood has made rulings accepted by the whole body, with the exception of a few who need curbing by the teachers. Thus the Playground largely cares for itself.

For the older boys the Vaulting Buck, the Shot, Jump Standards, Running Track and Jumping Pits have been placed. The Athletic Instructor is on the grounds at all times to give instructions, to lead and to inspire to greater efforts by showing the ease with which feats can be performed which seem just beyond the boys.

Each Playground has its equipment of play apparatus, adapted to the age of the pupils in the school. It is our intention to equip each new school with apparatus as soon as they are ready. Half of each school block is given to lawns, trees, ornamental shrubbery and walks. The other half of the grounds is given over to play apparatus.

Our play apparatus has proved that it exercises, produces health, eliminates mischief by providing employment, teaches fairness and respect for the rights of others, makes the school more attractive and makes the government of the pupils much easier.

We are using equipment manufactured by A.G. Spalding & Bros., and have found every piece of equipment to be exactly adapted to its purpose, and entirely free from imperfections of workmanship. From the date of its installation the apparatus has required no repairs.

Yours truly,

*Walter R. Siders*



## NATIONAL PLAYGROUND DAY IN PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL CLUBS

During the summer just passed Playground Day was observed for the first time by six of the major league baseball clubs—by Pittsburgh and Brooklyn at Pittsburgh, by Cincinnati and Boston at Cincinnati and by the American League teams of New York and St. Louis, at New York. The games were the result of an effort to call the attention of the prominent baseball men of the country to what playgrounds are doing for the national game by giving the boys of the country a chance to play. Many of the farsighted baseball leaders have come to see that the reduction of the number of boy players to-day will mean a falling off of men players and fans in the future. As the enthusiastic press agent in Pittsburgh wrote:

"Bleacher philosophers who mourn the dearth of good baseball material and look into a gameless future with dark forebodings are hereby bidden to rejoice, for the powers that rule in Fandom have discovered the salvation of baseball.

In former times when our major league players were pink young things of promise, ball players were trained in the back lots and open streets, but with the building up of the cities and the congestion of traffic in the streets, the embryo leaguer has been driven from his old haunts and the call of 'de empire' is no longer heard in the land except where the Playground Association of America is waging its merry warfare on behalf of the kiddies."

It is very likely that another year a similar plan will be tried with other clubs in the major leagues as well as in the minor leagues. Several of the prominent men in both major and minor circles when approached on the plan responded enthusiastically but it was impossible to work out the details for the general observance of the day this season since some of the clubs held off to see how the people responded to the experiment this year.

The Playground and Recreation Association of America would have a long list of people to thank if it remembered all those who have joined in to make National Playground Day the success that it was this year. The presidents of the National and American Leagues, and of many of the individual clubs, players, managers, newspaper men, local playground helpers, all took a hand.

